House of Commons Debates.

FIFTH SESSION—EIGHTH PARLIAMENT.

MR. CHARLTON'S

SPEECH

DEFENDING GREAT BRITAIN'S COURSE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR

DELIVERED FEBRUARY 13, 1900.

Mr. JOHN CHARLTON (North Norfolk). In the course of the remarks, Mr. Speaker, presented to the House this afternoon by the hon. the leader of the opposition a good deal of time was devoted by him to the task of proving that his past record had not been inconsistent with his present attitude upon the question of Imperial defence. I certainly have no disposition to call in question the accuracy of the hon. gentleman's remarks in that regard, and it would be far from affording myself or any member on this side any pleasure, were we able to prove any inconsistency in that regard. No member of this House, no citizen of this country will, I apprehend, raise the claim that the hon. leader of the opposition is not a truly loyal man—loyal to the empire and loyal to Canada.

His speech further was devoted to an attempt—justifiable perhaps from a partisan standpoint, as the leader of the opposition—to cast a certain measure of discredit upon the government for alleged tardiness in grappling with the great duty which confronted them in connection with the South African war and for half-heartedness in the course they at first pursued. His criticisms as regards this alleged lack of readiness of the government were of a character that I shall deal with in detail later on, and I think that I shall be able to convince myself at least that the government have acted in this matter with prudence, sagacity and dignity. It is to be lamented that an attempt should be made to make party capital part of this matter. This is a question above party politics, above politics in any sense. It is a question which should appeal to the patriotic impulses of every Canadian, and we should never permit an attempt to cast discredit on one party or make political capital out of this matter to be a factor in the discussion now before the House.

I propose to enter briefly into a discussion of the question as to whether the action of the government is justifiable. Of course we have this wave of patriotic fervour that has swept over the country. The government are unquestionably acting in accordance with the popular will. They have the mandate of the people to warrant their taking the course we are pursuing; but it would be well perhaps to calmly and dispassionately examine this subject and satisfy ourselves, if possible, whether, aside from excitement, aside from the general feeling that prevails in the country, there are really sound and sufficient reasons to justify the conduct of the government in this respect, and I propose briefly to deal with that question. I propose to do so because there are a great many people in Canada—more perhaps than is imagined—who are a little distrustful as to the propriety of the course the government have adopted, and who perhaps secretly cherish the opinion that this course is scarcely warranted. In my own constituency, the people are not influenced by the excitement which pervaeds great commercial, business and population centres; and in calmly considering this question, when this vote of $2,000,000 is asked, some of these constituents and other citizens in other rural constituencies of this country may possibly be disposed to cavil at the line of action adopted by the government, the first result of which is so palpable in the asking of this House to vote $2,000,000 to defray the expenses of the contingents. In looking this matter over, I propose to cover some little extent of ground. I propose, first of all, to inquire into the character of

the British title to South Africa. We hear asserted that this is a war for independence on the part of the Boers, that they are oppressed, that they have gone back into the wilderness and established a state with a government of their own, and that now, when the impingement has come with British population and British interests, they are being trampled into the dust by the superior power of the British nation. I propose, then, to inquire into the character of the British claim in South Africa. If our title is not a good one, of course the arguments which we base upon that title are false. I propose next to inquire, very briefly, as to the importance of South Africa. It may be asserted that this is a barren, inhospitable region, incapable of supporting a great population and that the importance of the country does not justify the exertion necessary to put down this rebellion, pacify the country and make it a secure British possession. I propose next to inquire what our own interests are in Africa. Our own interests there seem to be a somewhat remote matter. We are separated from Africa by the width and length of the Atlantic Ocean. It is a voyage of over 6,000 miles from one of our seaports to Cape Town, and the impression might prevail that, whether the British title was good or not, whether the country was good or not, we at least had little or no interest in the matter, and were not called upon to make sacrifices or undergo exertion, or in any manner to interfere. I shall examine next, very briefly, into the causes of the war. If we have a good cause, the war can be justified; if not, our action cannot be upheld. I shall next deal with the question of Canadian duty, viewed from the standpoint of our connection with the empire, viewed from the particular standpoint of the fact that we are a part of the empire, growing in population and power, joined to other portions, and with common interests with the rest of the empire. Taking this view, I shall inquire what is the duty of Canada in the premises. I shall next inquire whether the government has moved in this matter with due promptitude, whether their conduct is such as to warrant them in asking the people of Canada for their approval. I shall next have something to say about the propriety of avoiding an attempt to make party capital out of this affair, and to reduce this great question to the low level of party politics.

Now, Sir, with regard to the British title to South Africa. Cape Colony was founded by the Dutch in 1652. It was taken by the English in 1796. It was ceded to the Netherlands under the provisions of the treaty of Amiens in 1803. It was again occupied by the British troops in 1806, and in August, 1814, the British government extinguished the title of the Netherlands to Cape Colony and all their colonies in South America for a consideration of £6,000,000 sterling. So, the British first conquered the country, then they occupied the country, and then they paid £6,000,000 sterling for South Africa and some colonies of insignicant importance in South America. So, our title rests upon conquest, occupation and purchase. There can be no question as to the title.

The explorations of Africa by British subjects from an early day have fairly entitled Great Britain to claim almost any portion of the continent she might desire. Mungo Park and Lander first discovered and descended the Niger from Timbuctoo to the sea. Bruce, away back in the early part of the century, traced the blue Nile to its source, supposing that it was the true Nile. Sir Samuel Baker traced the white Nile to its source, and discovered the great equatorial lakes of Albert Nyanza and Victoria Nyanza. Burton and Speke discovered the great inland sea of Tanganyika. Stanley, a British subject, and now a member of the British parliament, traced the Congo from where Livingstone had left its descent to the sea. And Livingstone, the greatest of all African explorers, gave to the world knowledge of the whole South African empire, which now claims attention. He commenced his explorations in 1841. He was a missionary, and when he commenced his explorations, the whole of Africa was a blank from Kolobing, the most northern missionary station in South Africa, to Timbuctoo and Kartoum. He penetrated to the Zambesi in 1851, and discovered the Victoria Falls. Unaided and alone, he succeeded in getting the assistance of a party of Makololo, and made the journey from Linyanti to Loanda, on the west coast of Africa in the Portuguese colony of Angola. He retraced his steps to Linyanti, near the centre of the continent, and in 1853, he took a party of 126 Makololo and traced the course of the Zambesi to its mouth, being the first white man to cross the continent of Africa. He went to England, and returned under the auspices of the Geographical Society and the British government, and explored the Zambesi, discovering Lake Nyasa, a larger body of water than Lake Erie, traced the Zambesi and the Shire River, and discovered the great inland sea of Bangweolo, on the shores of which he afterwards died. He, as a British explorer, gave us knowledge of this whole region, which now forms or which will form the South African empire.

This is a country of very great importance, a country of an importance and magnitude which very few in this country understand. It is the richest mineral country in the world. It is rich in iron, in lead, copper, in coal—richer than any other land under the sun in gold and diamonds, and rich in silver. In this country are situated

the mines of the Witwatersrand, from which in 1898, £11,400,000 of gold were taken. Rhodesia, lately added to this country, extending north from the Transvaal to Lake Tanganyika, possesses, unquestionably, the richest gold-bearing region on the face of the globe, a region not developed, and only now commencing to be explored. In this region are found the traces of ancient mining, and ruins of great magnitude. Everything points to the correctness of the belief that this is the ancient Ophir. In Rhodesia, south of the Zambesi, within the next twenty years, if British supremacy is established, undoubtedly will be placed more than a million white men engaged in the cultivation of the soil, and digging from the bowels of the earth gold from the quartz reefs, and working the alluvial deposits in the valleys of the rivers. This is a region of breezy, salubrious upland, of rich valley, fertile corn lands, excellent fruit lands, and lands for the vine, a country admirably suited for settlement by whites, and possessing resources beyond the reach of imagination, resources which English statesmen are conversant with, but of which we are comparatively ignorant. The stake in this war is of immense magnitude, a stake of first-class importance, it is an empire with potential wealth beyond almost the dream or imagination of man. This South African empire, as at present constituted, contains five provinces, Cape Colony, Basutoland, Mashonaland, Natal and Rhodesia, with an area of 1,286,000 square miles. It has a native population of about 7,000,000, a white population of 475,000, and an Indian population from Hindostan, and centred in Natal, of 53,000. In addition to this are the territories of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. The Transvaal has an area of 119,000 square miles, the Orange Free State an area of 48,000 square miles, a total of 167,000 square miles. Of these two states, the Orange Free State has a white population of 77,000, and a native population of 130,000. The Transvaal has a Boer population, according to Whitaker's almanac of 1900, of 63,000, a Uitlander population of 87,000, and a native population of 600,000. Therefore the white population of these two Dutch states now in rebellion is 227,000, with a native population of 730,000. The Boer population in these two states is 140,000. The total population of British and Dutch Africa, including these two states is 8,500,000; the total white population is 700,000; and the total Dutch population of South Africa is, in round numbers, 340,000, as near as I am able to make out. The total area of Dutch and British Africa is, in round numbers, 1,500,000 square miles.

Mr. DAVIN. May I ask my hon. friend a question? Does he separate the white from the Boers, or include the Boers with the while population?

Mr. CHARLTON. I stated that the Dutch population of South Africa was, in round numbers, 340,000, out of a total white population of 700,000. In addition to this area of 1,450,000 square miles, this South African empire abuts upon the Congo Free State with an area of 900,000 square miles, and a native population of 30,000,000; upon Portuguese West Africa with 200,000 square miles, a rich country; and upon Portuguese East Africa, Mozambique, with an area of 620,000 square miles, and a population of 1,500,000. It is not reasonable to suppose that the limits now occupied by the Anglo-Saxon race of that country will continue to measure the bounds of their African empire, and they are almost certain to acquire Portuguese East Africa, and possibly the wheel of fortune may bring around some change by which they will take what they are justly entitled to by virtue of the discovery of the great basin of the Congo, the most of the Zambesi valley with a drainage of 1,500,000 square miles. They already have most of the Zambezi valley with a drainage of 800,000 square miles embraced in that territory. Now, I have said enough with regard to this matter, I think, to make it apparent that the claim I make that South Africa is a country of great importance, is well founded. With regard to the Transvaal, I have a few interesting figures to present. The Transvaal, or the Dutch Republic of South Africa, as it is called, has for the last five or six years extracted an enormous revenue, considering the extent of its population, from the foreign residents mainly, in that territory. In 1882 the revenue of the Transvaal was $870,000. Subsequent to that the gold mines of the Witwatersrand were discovered and worked, and in 1897 the revenue of this state was $22,000,000, mainly derived from the working of the mines. The total production of the mines in 1897 was $57,000,000, of which a taxation of $22,000,000, or 38 per cent was exacted from the Uitlanders who were working those mines. This revenue was obtained by exactions of the most outrageous and unjustifiable character, monopolies of various kinds; and the money so raised was expended, not for the benefit of the community, but for the purchase of arms and munitions of war that this state of the Transvaal might place itself in a position to enter upon the career of rebellion which it is now pursuing. The city of Johannesburg, with over 100,000 inhabitants, had 250 voters; and out of the vast amount contributed by those who had their homes in that city not a dollar was expended for drains, for sewerage, for school purposes, or for anything in the shape of public benefit. When Kruger invited to the Transvaal foreign immigration, a residence of two years

entitled the immigrant to tne franchise ; but as the immigrants began to pour in and it became apparent to this astute old Hollander that there was danger of the Boer element being submerged by the great tide of immigration flowing in, the franchise laws were utterly repealed. After a great effort a concession was made granting the franchise at the expiration of 14 years upon condition that when that period had expired the man who wished to exercise the franchise should get the written consent of two-thirds of the Dutch men who resided in the district where he voted, and then get the consent of the authorities of Pretoria. And these men, denied the franchise, these men from whom were wrung $22,000,000 of revenue in unjust taxation, these men were liable at twelve hours notice to be called into the military service of the Transvaal, without food, without clothing, without pay. These men were living in a country in which British authority should by right have been paramount, but they were helots, slaves, without rights in the country where they lived. There were of those Uitlanders 83,000, and 63,000 Boers ; there were of those Uitlanders 70,000 British subjects, or 80 per cent ; there were 7,000 more British subjects than the total number of Boers in the Transvaal. And these men were trodden upon, these men were denied every civil right, and the purpose of the Transvaal government was to continue denying them those rights and to make their life in the Transvaal one of bitterness and humiliation.

Now, British policy in South Africa has not always been a prudent or a wise policy. This struggle that is being fought out now ought to have been fought out in the days of Majuba Hill. That was the time to settle whether Africa should be Dutch or British. And in the Soudan where Gordon's life was sacrificed at Khartoum, it was a lack of courage, a lack of comprehension of the importance of the issue that led Gladstone to fail to secure the Soudan and to rescue Gordon when it could have been done at comparatively slight cost. At that time the great colonial possessions which have since fallen into the hands of Germany, of France, and of Belgium, might have been had by the British government by merely claiming possession of them ; but the policy of the British government of that time was one which failed to comprehend or failed to grasp the situation, and we are paying to-day the penalty of the mistakes made 20 or 30 years ago. But the British authorities understand the case now, and they have now clearly defined purposes as to South Africa. Whether those purposes are right or wrong is a question to be decided later on, but the character of those purposes and the policy of the British government with regard to South Africa, are clearly defined. Those purposes are to procure just as much of South Africa as they can get, and the more they get of Africa the better for the country. If they had it all it would be a God-send to the country over which British rule would prevail. And if we look at their accomplishments we will see hat they are making tolerably good progress. They have recently smashed the power of the Mahdi at Omdurman, they have nearly constructed a railway from Cairo to Khartoum, a distance of almost 2,000 miles ; they are building a railway from Mombossa, on the Indian Ocean, to Victoria Nyanza, the great equatorial lake in Uganda, a distance of 700 miles, they have pushed their railway system from Cape Town northward, they have nearly reached Mashonaland, they are almost to Salisbury, and but for the little unpleasantness that has occurred they would have reached the Zambesi. In one or two years more this line would have been pushed on northward to Lake Tanganyika ; then the gap from Tanganyika to Victoria Nyanza would have been rapidly constructed, and the dream of a railway from the Cape to Cairo would have been realized, and will be realized in due time. The scope of these English possessions is a grand one. They have acquired the entire valley of the Nile. There was a little question at one time whether France might not plant a post at Fashoda, but France has withdrawn. England has the valley of the Nile from the mouth to the Albert and the Victoria Nyanza, extending over 37 degrees of latitude, an empire in itself ; she has Uganda and great possessions in the equatorial regions of Africa. She has the great empire in South Africa, the position of which, the history of which, the value of which I am discussing to-night. This question as to the possession of Cape Colony and the country north of Cape Colony is one of importance to every person who is interested in British supremacy, and who wishes well to British interests. Cape Colony, as a strategetic position, is as important as Gibraltar, is as important as any other strategetic position on the globe. Its relation to Australia and its relation to India makes it a matter of prime importance that England should control it, because, in the hands of a foreign power, it would be a perpetual menace, not only maintaining the line of communication in the case of the closing of the Suez Canal, but as a rendezvous and harbour possibly for some maritime power hostile to British interests. Its strategetic importance is one that cannot be overestimated. Its importance to England is a matter which, in a lesser degree, makes it a matter of importance to ourselves. Our own interests, it is unnecessary to say, are intimately blended with those of the empire, and what is calculated to injure the empire is calculated to injure ourselves. We are interested in maintaining the Imperial power from the mercenary standpoint, from the standpoint of self-interest. We cannot afford to have the Imperial power destroyed, we cannot afford to have the power

and prestige of England weakened. We want her markets. Last year we sold to England 63 per cent of our exports—I say England, I mean Great Britain—we sold 63 per cent of our total exports to Great Britain, $99,000,000 worth, and to the whole world, Great Britain included, $158,000,000. Now, I repeat that the loss of territory by England involves the loss of trade, involves the loss of prestige and involves for us the loss of markets, so that we are directly and intimately interested in this question, and what is in the interest of England is in the interest of every portion of the empire, and especially in the interest of Canada, which is barred out by hostile tariffs from her natural market at her doors, and must continue to find her chief markets in the British islands. That market will be maintained and extended and will become more valuable only by the progress of British commerce and British wealth and by the continuance of British prosperity. I was talking with a young man, about 22 years of age, in my own county, who had volunteered to go to South Africa. His name is Stringer. I asked him why he was going to South Africa, and he gave me a theory of his own which he had. 'Yes,' he said, 'I am going to South Africa, not on account of England, but on account of Canada. I would like to know what would become of Canada if England is destroyed.' His reasoning was sound, he is a noble boy, and may God be his shield in battle in Africa, where he has gone to fight for the British cause.

We have certain obligations to England, and we do not, perhaps, always stop to realize what they are. We have enjoyed, from time immemorial, the protection of England, we have enjoyed the protection of England's navy and army, we have had the advantage of the services of England's diplomatic corps, we have had the advantage of the services of England's consular corps, and these advantages have not been of a less efficient character because we have not been called upon to pay a dollar for them. I say that we are under obligations to England, obligations the money value of which will infinitely exceed all that we will ever incur in the shape of expense in sending two contingents to South Africa. Then, this sending of the contingents is an epoch in our history. It is more than that, it is an epoch in British history, and the world is taking note of this thing, perhaps not saying very much about it, perhaps not fully, in some cases, realizing the significance of the thing; but, in the majority of cases, the significance of this movement is realized. I was reading an article in the January number of the *North American Review*, by a Russian writer, who refers to this country and says that this new movement is immense; it means that England's military strength is increased to the extent of the population of her colonies, and we may possibly have to face the eventualities of millions of the colonists of England and India being summoned into the field. When I hear talk about the magnitude of this struggle and the amount of difficulty that it imposes on England, and the strain that is to be put upon her resources, it seems to me the height of absurdity. I look back upon the struggle in the United States from 1861 to 1864, and in looking at the records I see that the North, with a population of 20,000,000, put 2,500,000 soldiers in the field, and that when the war closed they had a million veterans in arms. If this is the case, figure it out on the same basis, and it will be seen that England has a population, in round numbers, of 40,000,000, and her colonies a population, in round numbers, of 10,000,000, besides the vast hordes in India out of whom good soldiers can be made. The efforts necessary to be made to demonstrate England's capabilities as a great military power has as yet scarcely begun, and when people make pessimistic statements about the magnitude of this struggle, I laugh them to scorn. It is a large matter in one sense, it is going to cost a good deal of money and a good many lives, but to suggest that England is not capable of coping with this emergency, of putting down this rebellion of the Dutch element in South Africa is supremely preposterous.

And now, a word in regard to the character of British rule in South Africa. Of course, if we were engaged in forcing upon these people a tyrannical form of government, not calculated to bring blessings to the people, not calculated to afford to them that which every British subject has the right to demand—protection to life, protection to property, and enjoyment of liberty; if we were engaged in forcing any other kind of government on South Africa, the movement would not have my sympathy at least. But what is the character of British rule in South Africa? Sir, the character of British rule in South Africa is precisely the character of British rule in Canada. Cape Colony has representative institutions. It has two branches of the legislature; one elected by the people for seven years and the other for five. It has a governor appointed by the English government. Its premier at the present moment is an Afrikander. Its laws and institutions are administered in the same way as our own. Two languages are permitted in the assembly, the Dutch and the English, just as French and English are permitted here, and the same degree of care for the rights of others, of generosity towards others, of respect for the rights of all, characterizes British rule in South Africa as it characterizes British rule in Canada. All these British institutions in South Africa are institutions which Great Britain does not propose to change. She proposes to conquer that country, she proposes to crush the rebellion into fine dust, and then she proposes to give to every man in South Africa—Englishman or Dutchman, white man or black man—equal lib-

erty before the law, the right to enjoy all that he lawfully possesses, and perfect security in life, in liberty and in property. These are the institutions which South Africa, when it is erected into a dominion, would enjoy to the fullest extent and to the same degree as we do in this country. Now, Sir, I ask is not this consummation preferable to the erection of a Boer semi-civilized government—I beg pardon of my hon. friend from West Assiniboia (Mr. Davin), for he challenged that expression the other day—I repeat that the Boers are semi-civilized nomads; men who did originally come from a good stock, the descendants of Dutch and Huguenot ancestors, but who got mixed up with Hottentots and Zulus and Basutos and other tribes of South Africa, and are somewhat mongrel in their character now. Ten or fifteen per cent of them perhaps can read, the majority wander over the veldt, respect no rights, and enslave the natives. They are men who trekked off from Cape Colony many years ago because the British had there the same law for the white man that they had for the black man, and the same law for the black man as they had for the white man. They could not stand that, and so they went off to the north, following the Old Testament usage, as they supposed, of visiting the wrath of God upon Canaan, and enslaving the natives, and making their lives miserable in bondage, and denying them every right that pertains to humanity.

Boer versus British civilization is in the balance to-day, and one or the other has to prevail in that country. I for one have no doubt as to where the sympathies of every man in this House and of every man in this Dominion of Canada should rest in this great struggle between those two elements. Sir, I have heard criticisms upon the conduct of Mr. Chamberlain outside of this House, and in private conversations inside of this House. I have heard it asserted that Mr. Chamberlain on the one hand was just as much to blame for this war as Mr. Paul Kruger was on the other, and that this war could have been averted, and was a proof of a lack of diplomacy in the management of this matter. Why, Mr. Speaker, for the last eight years, ever since the mines of the Wittwatersrand have yielded a revenue, the Boers have been devoting that revenue to the purchase of arms. For the last ten years the Afrikander element in South Africa has steadfastly kept in view its ultimate object to make South Africa Dutch. There is just one underlying issue that has prevailed from the outset, and that is the issue to-day, viz.: Shall South Africa be Dutch, or shall South Africa be British. That is the question to be settled now. There is no outcome but to decide which it shall be, and either it will be Dutch and we will leave South Africa as Paul Kruger in his ultimatum practically demanded we should do last October; or, South Africa will be British and the Dutchman will have to be content with the same degree of liberty that the Englishmen possess. Notwithstanding all, England will see that the Dutchman has that liberty. The outrages that have been perpetrated on British subjects by the Boer government will have to cease. The tone of that ultimatum in last October is but a very poor basis for the assertion that the British in their treatment of the Dutch element in South Africa were arrogant, and rash and overbearing, and that they were to blame for the war. Sir, this war was a foregone conclusion. The Dutch had decided it should come, and they purposely precipitated the contest while the British troops were being gathered in South Africa so that they might strike the first blow under the circumstances which gave them a decided advantage, and which for the time being has seemed to have placed the British troops at a disadvantage, and has led perhaps to the belief that the Boers are fully the equal, if not the superior of the British soldier. Mr. Speaker, that is not the case. We heard quoted in this House not very long ago the aspersion once cast upon British generals, but, Sir, the very man who was reported to have said that the British general was a jackass, was himself conquered by a British general and as a result of his defeat, sent a prisoner to St. Helena. Of course, Sir, the British army is now engaged in a war under new conditions, as the American army was engaged in war under new conditions not long ago. This war is going to demonstrate a good many things that were not before known. It has already demonstrated the great advantage possessed by an army acting upon the defensive, behind rocks and entrenchments, and armed with Mausers and rapid-firing guns. The Boer, as he has been situated in Natal in the military operations up to the present, has been, I admit, an ugly customer. But, Sir, as I said the other night, the Boers have accomplished nothing in this war which has evinced great bravery and dash. They beseiged a little garrison at Mafeking, consisting of colonial troops, and not many of them, and they have had Mafeking under siege for several months but have failed to capture it. They have besieged two or three thousand British and colonial troops in Kimberley, but have not been able to take that town. They have besieged six or seven thousand British soldiers in Ladysmith, and beleaguered it with forty or fifty thousand men, but for months they have been unable to overcome the gallant resistance of the British soldiers there. I repeat: The British soldiers time and again have driven them from strong positions at the point of the bayonet, with gallantry such as could not have been excelled; and if you will give them a fair chance on an open field, the character of this war will soon demonstrate itself, and its result will very

soon be known, and will prove the superiority of British arms.

Now, this maintenance of British supremacy, I said a moment ago, is a matter in which we colonists in Canada are very directly and intimately interested. England has built up a very wonderful empire. If you look around the world, you will be struck with this fact. Here we have half of the North American continent, just in its infancy. We have room here for 75,000,000 people who can be fed from our own soil. We have in Australia an empire which will support probably 100,000,000 people. We have this magnificent region in South Africa which I have been describing. We have our hands upon every important naval strategic position in the world. We command the entrance to the Mediterranean at Gibraltar. We have our coaling and naval station at Malta in a commanding position half-way to the east. We control Egypt; we have the Suez Canal; we control the outlet to the Red Sea with our fortresses at Aden. We have a great naval position at Cape Town. We have our coaling stations and naval positions scattered over the whole face of the marine globe. We have Zanzibar, midway off the east coast of Africa, commanding the Zambesi, the German sphere of influence in Africa and the Portuguese sphere of influence in Africa. The British empire has its coigns of vantage and its strategic positions in every part of the globe; and its power is ubiquitous. Its sails are found on every sea; and its armies are collected in almost every part of the globe. Its accomplishments have been almost beyond human belief; and to talk of the incapacity of the leaders of the great movements or the lack of bravery on the part of men who have carried England's flag in triumph over so many quarters of the globe and over so many fields of action is the supremest folly. Of course, as I said a few moments ago, we have difficulties to meet; and perhaps, Mr. Speaker, it is a fortunate thing for Great Britain that we have occasion now to test our strength. Perhaps it is a fortunate thing for us that we are taking a short canter over the military field under these changed conditions, to adjust our chronometers, to test our armaments, to ascertain where weak points exist, so as to get ready for any great difficulties that may come in the future, and to know how to strike great blows unerringly and efficiently when the occasion arises. In that respect the two great Anglo-Saxon nations of the world, the United States and England, have passed through the training required to fit them to meet great emergencies. Sir, we have lost some men in the Transvaal. It is an unfortunate thing. We may expect to lose some more. You do not go to war and fight battles with an enemy capable of handling arms without loss of men. You have to expect that; but we have lost very few men compared with the numbers that have been lost in other wars. We have had some reverses; but the reverses have reflected no dishonour on our arms. We have had no reverse like Bull Run, the opening episode in the American struggle. We have had no fighting like the fighting at Cold Harbour, where 10,000 men were swept out of existence in twenty minutes through tne mistake of a general. We have had no fighting like that at Gettysburg, where Pickett's brigade of 20,000 men made its assault on the Union centre and the fire was held till the assaulting column was within twenty rods, and 6,000 men went to their death in sixty seconds. We have lost no such numbers of men as were lost at Chancellorsville. And we have had a greater reserve to draw upon than the republic which sustained these losses, and yet fought through and came out triumphant at the end, having buried, indeed, half a million men, but having proved its capacity to subdue the rebellion and its right to claim the position of a first-class power. No, we do not need to borrow trouble about this matter. You do not need to sit down and talk about the necessity of calling the leaders of the opposition and the leaders of the government in this House together, or to resolve ourselves into a Committee of the Whole to determine what is to be done. In the first place, we have not anything to do with what is to be done. We are not fighting this battle. We are not managing these military movements. That belongs to the British War Office. We are doing what lies in our power to promote the interests of the British Empire, and we are called upon not to direct the military operations, not to tell England what is to be done, but to send as many men as we can spare, to raise as much money as we can, and to do our duty as a child of the motherland, loyal to her interests, and well aware that her interests are ours.

And now, Sir, I think I have satisfied my own mind, and I hope I have satisfied those who have listened to me, that we have a good title to South Africa, that it is a country of importance which we want to retain, that we have a just cause, that our interests have been trampled upon in that country and our citizens subjected to indignities and wrongs which we could not brook, and which we would have been cravens if we had permitted to pass unchallenged. I am not one of those prepared to support a resolution like the Redmond resolution, which I consider the resolution of enemies actuated by treasonable feelings. No, Sir, our motto should be 'No Surrender;' and I believe that Canada in this matter has acted in a proper and patriotic spirit. We have a personal interest now in this struggle, and I believe that our hearts all reach out to the brave boys, our own brothers and sons, who have gone to South Africa. I deprecate the evident attempt that has

been made to make party capital out of this matter. It has been said that the government moved too slowly, that they ought to have led public opinion, that they ought to have jumped right into the breach and decided incontinently that they would send their contingent to South Africa. Well, governments as a rule are elected to carry into effect certain lines of policy. They do not originate these lines of policy; but the people decide questions at the polls, and a government is installed in office for the purpose of giving effect to the policy which the people have decided upon as a proper one. The question of sending a contingent to Africa had never been passed upon by the people of Canada. The government had no mandate in this matter, and the government, in my opinion, were not called upon to assume that they knew what the people wanted until the people expressed some indication as to their own opinions on the matter. In the great struggle of the United States, to which I referred a moment ago, when President Lincoln took office, state after state seceded. Why, then, did not President Lincoln at once call out the troops? Because he was uncertain of public opinion, and he waited until the American flag was actually struck down at Fort Sumpter and until American blood was shed, before issuing a proclamation calling out a single soldier, and then he only called out 75,000 men, committing the error with which the British government has been charged, of underrating the magnitude of the task before him. He recognized that slavery was the cause of the civil war, he was an anti-slavery man from his youth, he was always ready and anxious to destroy slavery, he was petitioned to abolish slavery by the anti-slavery societies, and by ministers of the gospel, who preached that the negro should be free, he was pressed to issue a proclamation emancipating the slaves, but he withheld his decision and waited. Not because he was not willing and ready and anxious to do it. No, he waited until he knew he had public sentiment behind him, and when that point was reached, when he knew that public sentiment would back him up, he issued his proclamation emancipating the slaves. He issued it two years after the struggle had begun—on January 1, 1863. Why did he not jump in and lead public opinion? He knew better. He knew it was necessary to have public opinion to back him up, and that it was not for him to create public opinion, that he could not do it. So, with hon. gentlemen occupying the Treasury benches here. The issue was a new one. They were confronted by a crisis of a grave character that had never confronted Canada before. It was proper for them to see that any steps taken in this case should be taken only after being fully certain of popular approval. It would have been quite constitutional to call parliament together. It would have been a proper, perhaps, but not a practical thing, because the first thing that would have happened would have been a debate perhaps of a month on the address, and in the meantime we would not have been sending the contingents to South Africa, but the government took action in this case as fast as public opinion crystallized, and as fast as they felt public sentiment behind them with sufficient distinctness and force to warrant them in believing that they were acting in a line that would receive public approval. I hold that the government proceeded in this matter as promptly and as courageously as the condition of the case would warrant, and as rapidly as their duty required. And the government to-day is undoubtedly ready to do whatever the people ask, and I am sorry to hear these carping criticisms, because I repeat, this question is above politics. We want, as parties, to make our capital out of some other kind of issues than this. I am, therefore, sorry to hear these carping criticisms about the tardiness of the government in not proposing at once to pay all the expenses and give full pay to our soldiers, and all these other things. Why, Mr. Speaker, the government are doing all that is necessary, and all that we can require as soon as it is necessary. They have the responsibility of office resting upon them. They cannot jump up and propose rashly one thing or another, but have to reflect that in every step they take they are accountable to the people, and are custodians of the public interests, and must give an account of their stewardship; and if mistakes should be made in a grave crisis like this, they are responsible, and the government are to be commended rather than censured for the course they have taken in this matter from beginning to end. For myself, I say they have taken a course which I approve of, which I think no party in this country is called upon to disapprove, and I think we had better get up our political quarrels on some other issue and join hands in this matter to preserve the honour of Canada and to hold up the hands of the mother country and do our duty as loyal subjects.

There is one consideration in connection with this matter, Mr. Speaker, that has occurred to me, and it would have a great amount of force with me if I were upon the opposition benches. I should be very much afraid, Sir, of placing myself in a position where I would be liable to the charge of having sought to embarrass the government by making demands which I foresaw would lead to a large increase of debt and a great drain of human life, and that when these things came back, when the consequences returned upon our heads,

I might turn round and upbraid the government for its recklessness in incurring an enormous debt, and in the sacrifice of Canadian lives and interests. I do not accuse the opposition of being animated by any motive so base, but these are considerations that might have weight with an unscrupulous opposition. It might be that the opposition would hound and dog the government for having incurred great expense and sent a great number of men abroad, with the result that there would be mourning in due time at home, as many would never return, and might be looking forward to the time when the people, on reflection, would say: You went too fast, you piled up an enormous amount of debt, thousands of our sons have never returned, you were too precipitate in this matter. These charges, which might be urged by an opposition without scruples, and actuated by mercenary motives, as of course this opposition would never be—these charges might be made, not from patriotic motives, but from a desire to ultimately embarrass the government. We want to bear these things in mind. The gentlemen of the opposition ought to remember that the government have all these considerations to take into account. The government will have to meet, in the future, the accumulation of debt, and the fact that a great many gallant Canadians have gone from our shores who will find graves in a foreign land. These are matters requiring due consideration, and concerning which patriotic and generous feeling should sway all classes and parties in this country.

I am sure that these reasons I have urged are a justification of the course that I intend to take, as a representative of the electors of North Norfolk, in supporting the government in the policy it has inaugurated. I am ready to face the consequences of voting any amount of money that may be deemed necessary to vote for maintaining the honour of Canada and the interests of the empire. I am ready to say: Send as many men as are required, feeling sure that willing hearts are ready to respond to the call, and that these men will never bring disgrace upon their native land. I am for all this, and I am ready to confront, if need be, any contingency and any crisis that may arise. I have no fear as regards the position and condition of affairs as they exist to-day, but something more serious may come up. There may be interference. England is not very popular in Europe, I believe. I suppose it is due largely to the fact that she has outdistanced all her rivals. But we might have interference, we might have a condition of things that would cause us to deliberate as to what course we ought to pursue, and to summon to our aid our utmost resolution. If these things come, in God's providence, they will have to be met, but I feel that we can hardly have a general European interference, because we can hardly expect the Dreibund and Russia and France to act together, and we hope that we shall find Great Britain sailing smoothly along without interference. But if interference takes place, we shall simply have to meet it, and I hope we are able to meet it, believing that we have the power behind us.

Feeling that the interestes of the great empire with which we are associated and bound up to-day, and of which we are a part, and rapidly increasing part in importance, I venture to implore those who are listening to me to-night to look upon this question calmly and dispassionately, from the standpoint of patriotic Canadian citizens, scorning to make out of such an issue, base political party capital, seeking to promote the interests of the grandest empire of the globe, by doing our duty manfully and honestly in the crisis that confronts this empire and this great colony.